



***Aboriginal news from across Turtle Island and beyond
October 28 – November 1, 2013***

Former Musqueam Chief Ernie Campbell remembered: Vancouver Mayor and BC Premier speak about Campbell's influence on the province

[News 1130](#)

October 27, 2013 1:09 am

Sara Norman



Musqueam First Nation Chief Ernie Campbell. (Dan Burritt, News1130 Photo)

VANCOUVER (NEWS1130) – Longtime Musqueam Chief Ernie Campbell has died. He's being remembered for his contribution to Vancouver over the years.

Vancouver Mayor Gregor Robertson remembers Campbell as "a thoughtful, determined leader who helped build bridges and foster understanding between cultures," and co-host the Vancouver 2010 Olympics.

Premier Christy Clark issued a statement of condolence remembering Campbell as one of the foremost First Nations Leaders in the province.

Campbell served as the leader of the city's only First Nations Reserve for 14 years before announcing he wouldn't seek re-election in 2012.

Campbell was most recently known for his push to preserve the Marpole Midden, an aboriginal historical site previously earmarked for condo development.

Powwow helps family revive Cree culture

[StarPhoenix](#)

October 28, 2013

Jason Warick



Candace Gadwa, husband Jacob Faithful and one of their children, two-year-old Jairus. Photograph by: Jason Warick, The StarPhoenix

Jacob Faithful wasn't offended his wife of 10 years, Candace Gadwa, didn't adopt his surname.

It's not because he's a particularly modern man or sees himself as a feminist - it's because Faithful is not his real name. In fact, Gadwa isn't hers, either.

"We don't feel any connection to those names," the Frog Lake Cree Nation drummer said during a break at the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN) powwow at Credit Union Centre Sunday afternoon.

His family is part of the Thunderbird clan, which had an elaborate single naming system. With the arrival of European settlers, his grandfather was placed in the Blue Quills, Alta. residential school. He and other students were given a book full of European surnames and told to choose one.

"That's how we became Faithfuls," he said.

The schools and society shamed his grandparents and parents. Faithful grew up in a home devoid of Cree language and culture.

As he grew up and gained confidence, Faithful returned to his family's powwow traditions. For nearly 20 years, he's been one of the top drummers and singers in North America. His group, Young Spirit, won the world drum championships this year in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Now, he prefers his "real" name, Okisiko kamo, which means "person that sings in the sky." His wife, a teacher's aid working toward her Cree language degree, is an eagle clan member and fancy dancer. She's named Osamekwan kehew sko, or "golden eagle feather woman."

Together, often with their five children who all sing or dance, they travel the powwow circuit across North America. Their black Dodge caravan is only a couple of years old, but has already logged well over 200,000 kilometres.

"It's hard on the vehicle. It's expensive, but when you arrive, it's like you're with family," she said.

They said the pow wow is a fun social event, not to mention good exercise, but it's also a way to connect to something deeper.

"We sing for our ancestors, for old people who are sick and for those that are hurting," he said.

"When I hit that drum and when I sing with intensity, it is overwhelming."

The best part, he said, is that his grandparents all saw him reviving their family culture before they died.

"They saw I was bringing it back. That meant a lot to them, and to me."

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Law outside the classroom: NSBS offers new internship

[Canadian Lawyer Magazine](#)

October 28, 2013

Julie Sobowale



Keeley Phillips says her volunteer internship in Whitehorse gave her lots of self-confidence.

The law became real to Keeley Phillips last summer. After finishing her first year at the Dalhousie University Schulich School of Law, she travelled to Whitehorse to work for the Council of Yukon First Nation as part of a 14-week internship through Canadian Lawyers Abroad.

Her goal was to educate First Nations on changes to the Canadian Human Rights Act, which was no easy task. She had to learn how to network with different First Nations organizations and overcome her fear of public speaking to present her research to public policy officials.

"I gained so much confidence," says Phillips. "I had to network with different groups, set up meetings, and do research on my own. I learned what I could accomplish on my own and it gave me more self-esteem."

Phillips couldn't have gone to Whitehorse without the \$1,000 in financial support from the Nova Scotia Barristers' Society. She is the first recipient of the NSBS Presidents' Leadership Summer Internship, an award aimed at supporting students' volunteer projects focused on governance.

The program was created by former NSBS presidents Philip Star and Catherine Walker as a way to encourage students to volunteer in the community and create

opportunities for them to gain practical experience.

"We want students to implement the law at a higher level," says Star, a partner at Pink Star Barro in Yarmouth, N.S. "It's a chance for students to see how the abstract and philosophical law is really used in real life."

Walker came up with the idea for the internship program after working with law students in her office.

"I want more lawyers connected to law students," she says. "Having students work on governance issues is a part of our access to justice mandate. Students get to see a different side of the law by working with consumers."

As the profession continues to evolve, the NSBS is hoping to make more meaningful connections with students. This means supporting students in their volunteer projects, rewarding students for their community leadership, and establishing mentorship programs.

In 2006, Star and Walker established the NSBS Presidents' Leadership Award, given to a graduating law student who exemplifies leadership in the community.

The summer internship is similar to the leadership award. First-year law students can apply through the dean's office in the spring detailing how their project or internship will benefit the community. Projects must be a minimum of four weeks and can be related to any Canadian organization.

"We wanted to frame the award on leadership and governance so that students are aware of these issues for the future," says Walker, a solo practitioner in Halifax.

Currently, the internship is offered to only one student per year but Walker hopes to expand the award to multiple students in their second and third year.

"We want to develop and evolve the program to more students," she says. "I'm interested in bringing law students into the practice of volunteering in the community."

Originally from a small aboriginal community in northern Manitoba, Phillips knew she wanted to work in the North.

"I've been working with aboriginal groups since my undergrad years," she says. "I knew I wanted to continue that work in law school. I'm really interested in First Nations rights."

Phillips certainly got a taste of working with the public. Besides her work with aboriginal groups, she volunteered at the Assembly of First Nations general

assembly and the Yukon Humane Society. She hopes to focus more on aboriginal law and perhaps make another trip to the Yukon.

"It's really inspiring to see the law come alive," she says.

B.C. First Nations fear being cut out of LNG windfall

[Vancouver Sun](#)

October 28, 2013 6:33 AM

Mike Hager



A 2012 artist's rendering of the proposed Kitimat Apache Canada's LNG facility.

First Nations fear they are being cut out of a potential \$2.5 billion windfall from the development of B.C.'s liquefied natural gas and mining sector and want the provincial government to mandate at least a quarter of those projects to use energy from B.C.'s independent power producers.

The income could flow to more than 100 First Nations and up to 9,500 spinoff jobs could be created through equity stakes in the mostly run-of-river hydro projects, royalties from the private sector and revenue sharing with the provincial government, according to a study being presented today at the Clean Energy Association of B.C.'s annual conference.

Judith Sayers, chair of the association's First Nations committee, said BC Hydro's draft plan projects the majority of B.C.'s liquefied natural gas boom will be powered

by gasdriven compressors and not independent power producers, which can offer long-term stable revenue for First Nations. "All of a sudden we're being cut out," the former chief of the Hupacasath First Nation said. "If they want to rejuvenate the economy, including First Nations in this is a key part of that."

"The premier and the ministers need to sit down with First Nations and really look at the benefits (of IPP power production)."

Projects like the Hupacasath's China Creek hydro station - which can power up to 6,000 homes and opened in December 2005 - builds First Nations' business capacity and helps fund social programs, Sayers said.

The Hupacasath own almost threequarters of the \$13.8-million project and is using a 20-year BC Hydro contract to pay off the station's debt within a year or two, Sayers said.

The association said 125 of B.C.'s 203 First Nations are somehow involved in independent power production.

Shishalh (Sechelt) First Nation Chief Garry Feschuk said his band has gained invaluable experience in the industry since an independent power production facility was built on its territory in 1997. The Shishalh are now considering building a cluster of five similar hydro stations of their own.

Recently, Energy Minister Bill Bennett announced BC Hydro will cancel as many as 10 electricity purchase contracts on clean energy projects from independent power producers to contain rising energy costs. Delivery is being deferred on another nine contracts. Bennett could not be reached Sunday, but is scheduled to speak at the association's conference today.

Bennett's ministry is reviewing Hydro's plan for meeting B.C. electricity needs. Paul Kariya, executive director of the Clean Energy Association of B.C., said he hopes "the door isn't closed" and that all parties can find a "sweet spot" where independent power producers can provide some of the energy needed in B.C.'s north.

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Natives focus of 'colonial science': Dietary experiments likely one of many, researcher says

[Winnipeg Free Press](#)

October 27, 2013

Bill Redekop



A nurse takes a blood sample from a boy at the Indian School, Port Alberni, B.C., in 1948, during the time when nutritional experiments were being conducted on students there and five other residential schools. (ARCHIVES CANADA)

There were "likely" other experiments carried out on First Nations people in the last century, but further study is needed, said the researcher who recently found dietary experiments were conducted by federal health officials on northern First Nations people between 1942 and 1952.

Former residential school students have always maintained they were subjected to experiments.

"It took a white guy with a PhD" to get people to start believing them, said Ian Mosby, a post-doctoral fellow at Guelph University.

"It seems this is just scratching the surface," Mosby said following his presentation.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission that's gathering residential school testimonies wants to look further into this area, "but it's not possible without an extension of its mandate."

The federal government is not looking favourably on an extension, he said.

Mosby spoke at a Canadian Food History Symposium at the University of Winnipeg Saturday. He said malnutrition was widespread in northern First Nations before and after the Second World War, partly due to their traditional diet being replaced by store-bought products from the south.

However, Mosby stressed nutrition was never withheld from aboriginal children nor adults as part of the experiment.

Additional vitamin and mineral supplements were only provided to a group of aboriginals to see whether they performed better in school and other endeavours and whether they were healthier. He said some media have misconstrued his study to mean the federal government withheld nutrition as part of the study. He has tried to correct that misconception, he said.

What was withheld from some aboriginal people in the study was dental service, because the researchers thought that might somehow skew the results.

In effect, Mosby said, federal health officials viewed "residential schools and First Nations as laboratories." He called it "colonial science."

He said the aim of the study he uncovered was to prove a hypothesis nutrition was one of the root causes of what was called "the Indian problem" back then.

Researchers concluded in a preliminary report, read by Mosby at the symposium, "It is not unlikely that many characteristics, such as shiftlessness, indolence, improvidence and inertia, so long regarded as inherent or hereditary traits in the Indian race may, at the root, be really the manifestations of malnutrition." Little ever came of the study.

Mosby was taken by surprise by the response to his story. For example, it ran on the front page of the Toronto Star for three straight days. He was besieged by interview requests.

But he has seen very little positive impact so far, other than to affirm the suspicions of former residential school students. He called on Ottawa to make available the archives of Health Canada and Indian Affairs for researchers to study. For example, it is commonly known staff at residential schools were much better fed than the children in their charge.

Experiments were conducted on about 1,000 aboriginal people, about 300 of whom were Cree from Norway House and Cross Lake in northern Manitoba.

The figure includes the "control group," who received dietary supplements to improve their nutrition.

Funding aimed to help preserve Aboriginal cultural heritage

[The Telegram](#)

October 28, 2013

Funding of \$50,000 has been provided to 12 Aboriginal groups in the province to support projects that try to preserve and protect Aboriginal practices and traditions.



Nick McGrath

A news release states that projects eligible for funding include those which document and develop an inventory of Aboriginal cultural traditions, encourage cultural economic activity and recognize, celebrate and promote Aboriginal heritage.

The funding comes through the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Program (ACHP).

"Newfoundland and Labrador has a rich Aboriginal cultural diversity," said Nick McGrath, Minister Responsible for Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs.

The 2013-14 ACHP recipients include:

- Qalipu Mi'kmaq First Nation — \$12,000 to conduct an extensive inventory of cultural knowledge, including traditional skills held by Mi'kmaq Elders living in Newfoundland, to ensure the safeguarding and promotion of culture, language and traditions.
- Nunatsiavut Government — \$10,000 to document Inuit games that were played every day. These games will be incorporated into the café area of the Torngâsok Cultural Centre.
- KANGIDLUASUK Student Program — \$8,000 to include the involvement of two Nunatsiavut Elders with the youth program at the Torngat Mountains Base Camp and Research. The Elders will facilitate small workshops involving soapstone carving and seal skin cleaning.
- White Elephant Museum — \$4,000 to provide training in digital storytelling to increase accessibility to their intangible cultural heritage. This training will be provided in Makkovik by the My Word: Storytelling and Digital Media Lab based in Rigolet.
- Corner Brook Aboriginal Women's Association — \$4,000 to raise community awareness of Mi'kmaq history, culture and heritage through a two-day workshop on traditional beading techniques and basic traditional earring and pendant making.
- Innu Nation — \$4,000 to conduct a number of oral history interviews with Elders in Natuashish that focus on their connection with the land, family histories, traditional clothing and other cultural traditions. An open session will also be held to invite members of the community to view photographs taken between 1920 and 1950 and share stories.
- Melgignat Mi'kmaq Women's Group — \$2,000, in partnership with the Indian Cove Women's Circle, to teach Aboriginal women to make traditional medicine bags and bundles, and to teach young people how to make traditional regalia.
- Flat Bay Indian Band — \$2,000 to provide dance teachings to children age 2-12 to safeguard the traditions and culture of the Mi'kmaq people in Bay St. George.
- Newfoundland Aboriginal Women's Network — \$1,000 to support traditional activities such as sweetgrass braiding and storytelling that took place during the Bay St. George Powwow in July.

- Gander Bay Indian Band Council — \$1,000 to assist the Band purchase digital recording equipment that will help them initiate an oral history project.
- Miawpukek First Nation — \$1,000 to pass along traditional knowledge and practices to the community and school children by offering workshops and presentations in traditional practices such as drummaking, canoe making, eel spears, snowshoes, jewelry and regalia.
- Torngat Arts and Crafts — \$1,000 to support the 6th katilautta Music Festival, held in Nain in August.

Whipping cash-starved native schools into shape won't work (Editorial)

[Toronto Star](#)

October 28, 2013



*Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt unveils a punitive plan to whip aboriginal schools into shape.
Adrian Wyld / THE CANADIAN PRESS*

Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt announced a plan to upgrade the quality of aboriginal education, but he isn't going to address the \$2,000- to \$3,000-per-student funding gap between reserve schools and provincial schools.

The shortcomings of Canada's aboriginal education system have been well-documented. For decades Ottawa has underfunded reserve schools, ignored their disproportionately high dropout rate, and shrugged off the funding gap between reserve schools and provincial schools.

It should have been good news this past week when Aboriginal Affairs Minister [Bernard Valcourt](#) rolled out the [First Nations Education Act](#), a comprehensive plan to upgrade the quality of aboriginal education.

But the reforms the minister proposed were so heavy-handed that First Nations immediately struck a defensive posture, branding the plan dictatorial and [patronizing](#). Aboriginal leaders accused him of imposing onerous demands without providing the resources to meet them; spurning their pleas for collaboration and ignoring the [United Nations](#), which urged Ottawa not to rush ahead unilaterally.

The opposition parties echoed those concerns in [Parliament](#). Jonathan Genest-Jourdain, aboriginal affairs critic for the New Democratic Party, warned that Valcourt was launching his overhaul of aboriginal education “in a climate of utter distrust.”

The [bill](#) is needlessly confrontational. It empowers the government to seize control of First Nations schools that aren’t meeting Ottawa’s standards. It authorizes federal inspectors to review each school once a year, recommend improvements and appoint a manager if they were not implemented. It does not provide a single dollar to address the \$2,000- to \$3,000-per-student funding gap between reserve schools and provincial schools. It would not lift the 2-per-cent-a-year on funding for aboriginal education that has prevailed since the Conservatives took power in 2006.

“What the government will not do is throw more money at a known system of education that proves to be failing too many First Nations students across the country,” Valcourt insisted.

The minister assured parliamentarians he is committed to working with aboriginal peoples. If he is sincere, he will have to drop his Ottawa-knows-best attitude, forsake his strong-arm tactics and rethink his refusal to pay for the reforms he is ordering First Nations to make.

The federal government has done a dismal job of administering the 515 reserve schools under its jurisdiction. It does not provide funding for libraries, vocational training, information technology, sports or recreation programs. It does not pay for basic [maintenance](#); many of these schools have leaky roofs, sewage backups and unreliable electricity. A third lack access to clean drinking water. No provincial education ministry operates this way. Yet Valcourt is portraying himself as the champion of Canada’s aboriginal children, the fix-it man who will set things right.

If he wants better results, Valcourt will have to persuade his cabinet colleagues that aboriginal students deserve the same support as their non-aboriginal counterparts.

The aboriginal affairs minister could scarcely have chosen a more inopportune time to inflame tensions between Ottawa and First Nations. They were already simmering over everything from [resource development](#) to the [disappearance](#) of aboriginal women and girls. The [residential schools tragedy](#) was still a traumatic memory for aboriginal elders. [Shawn Atleo](#), national chief of the Assembly of First Nations, had warned him that eight consultations — plus online questionnaires — were not an adequate basis for proceeding. Oblivious to the trouble signals, Valcourt barrelled ahead.

This is a formula for failure. The ministry of aboriginal affairs has cabinets full of stillborn policies to prove it.

Hoping to begin 2013 on a positive note, Prime Minister Stephen Harper promised First Nations leaders an ongoing dialogue based on “mutual respect, friendship and support.” If he intends to keep that pledge, he will have to rein in his overbearing minister.

Aboriginal Leaders Gather to Address Issues Facing Reading in their Communities

[Canada NewsWire](#)

October 28, 2013

More than 40 leaders in the field of aboriginal reading are gathering in Banff, Alberta October 27 to 29 for a roundtable discussion about the future of reading in their communities.

Aboriginal reading advocates speaking at the event include authors Richard Wagamese and Waubgeshig Rice, publishers/editors Paul Seesequasis (Theytus Books) and Randal McIlroy (Pemmican Publications), among others, as well as aboriginal librarians, literacy experts and educators. Susan Aglukark, a strong advocate for literacy for her people, will give a keynote speech.

The roundtable is in response to the same set of issues as addressed in the recent People for Education Report citing the low high-school graduation rates for aboriginal children.* The report notes that aboriginal Ontarians in the public school system score 20% lower on literacy tests than the provincial average. Sixty percent of aboriginal Canadians do not have the literacy skills necessary to participate fully in our society.**

The challenges are diverse and complex, and it is essential that any plan for addressing the issues come from within those communities. To that end, the National Reading Campaign is facilitating a series of three policy roundtables over three years. The roundtables will bring together aboriginal leaders in the field of reading to explore approaches and create an effective plan to promote access to reading on and off reserves for children and youth, and to create a much-needed common agenda to champion reading and reading policies for aboriginal children.

Schools are the place where all Canadians should have an opportunity to embrace the joy of reading. Yet many people continue to be excluded from the reading experience in Canada, particularly aboriginal peoples. Reading statistics for Canada's First Nations, Inuit and Metis are much lower than for other Canadians. Financing for education and libraries within these communities is unstable, and at a much lower rate than the national average. (If you'd like to read more about the situation, see the Assembly of First Nations' [Call to Action on Education](#) ***).

Conference Co-chair Harvey McCue says that, "The National Reading Campaign and TD Bank Group want to facilitate a discussion amongst aboriginal peoples about how we can best work towards addressing the chronic inequities in financing and resources for aboriginal reading across Canada."

"Aboriginal Readers: Opening New Worlds" is sponsored by TD. TD has a long-standing commitment to literacy, and recently published a comprehensive report on aboriginal literacy, "Literacy Matters: Unlocking the Potential of Aboriginal Peoples in Canada."**

*<http://www.peopleforeducation.ca/pfe-news/most-first-nations-metis-and-inuit-students-attend-ontarios-provincially-funded-schools/>

**<http://www.td.com/document/PDF/economics/special/LiteracyMattersUnlockingtheLiteracyPotentialofAboriginalPeoplesinCanada.pdf>

***http://www.afn.ca/uploads/files/education/11-06-11_a_call_to_action_year_in_review.pdf

Canada's Baby Veronicas Sue: Adoptees Seized in 'Sixties Scoop' Approved for Class Action Lawsuit

[Indian Country Today](#)

October 28, 2013

David P. Ball



Apihtawikosisan.com The children who were taken from their families during the Sixties Scoop are known as a hidden generation among those fighting for justice.

A class-action lawsuit against the Canadian government on behalf of tens of thousands of aboriginal children who were seized and moved to white families in an adoption wave known as the "Sixties Scoop" can now proceed after being approved by an Ontario judge.

The decision was handed down after several previous lawsuits in Canada failed, and as attention in the U.S. focused on the Baby Veronica custody case.

"[The] harm done was profound and included lasting psychological and emotional damage," said Justice Edward Belobaba in rejecting the government's arguments and summarizing his rationale for certifying the case, which affects at least 16,000 children in Ontario alone.

The Sixties Scoop followed a similar pattern across Canada, as the federal government signed funding agreements with the provinces that extended provincial child and family welfare services onto First Nations reserves. For example, in Ontario, the Crown signed the Ontario-Canada-Ontario Welfare Services Agreement on December 1, 1965. That lasted until the end of 1984, when a new federal law, the Child and Family Services Act, made "aboriginality an important factor in child protection and placement practices," Belobaba said in his September 27 decision.

The class action is being represented by Beaverhouse First Nation Chief Marcia Brown Martel, who was seized from her Ojibwe family and adopted into a community where she was the only Native.

"It is in the power of the Government of Canada to right this wrong, to change how our Canadian systems work with aboriginal communities, to take the apology they offered and stand by it, and have it be a cornerstone to a new relationship—a dynamic, fulfilling relationship—to extend the apology to more than just fine words," she told Indian Country Today Media Network. "It needs action."

Currently, she added, there are "more than just the survivors to contend with. Every community that lost children to the Sixties Scoop has parents and extended family also affected by the loss of their loved ones.

"I was swept from my family, my community, my siblings, my extended family, my ability to function as an aboriginal person at all," she said, "I had nothing as a young person, to say, 'Yes, I am First Nations,' other than the color of my skin and my hair. That's all I had left."

As the only aboriginal person in a non-Native community, she felt completely alone in her struggles even into adulthood.

"Personally, it was a very, very lonely time in my life," she said. "You start searching as a young adult to find your community. I'm very fortunate: I remembered my

name as Sally Susan Mathias. Some may be so young that they would never remember their birth name. You don't know where to begin. It is an extremely difficult process."

According to Sixties Scoop survivor Ernie Crey, who co-authored the 1998 book *Stolen from Our Embrace* (Douglas & McIntyre) with Suzanne Fournier and founded an aboriginal-run child welfare agency in British Columbia, Canadian aboriginal child welfare policies differ significantly from those in the U.S.

"It's a patchwork quilt here in Canada, versus what's true in the U.S. in the way of child protection," Crey explained. "There isn't a National Indian Child Welfare Act in Canada, or anything even remotely like it, either. That goes back to the Sixties, when the Department of Indian Affairs refused to legislate child protection under the Indian Act. They abandoned the field to each province. That's what precipitated the Sixties Scoop."

As some residential schools began to close around the same time, the change in child protection "created a perfect storm," Crey said. "That's when the social workers from each province literally ... descended on the communities and apprehended children en masse."

Advocates have described the Sixties Scoop as "identity genocide of children." But many point out that even today there are more aboriginal children in Canada's child welfare system than ever attended residential schools.

"We're basically warehousing thousands and thousands of children in long-term care," Crey said. "We're confining them to foster care."

In another prominent case, First Nations Child and Family Caring Society director Cindy Blackstock and the Assembly of First Nations have taken the issue of unequal funding for aboriginal child services to the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal.

Blackstock cited recent statistics that 48 per cent of children in foster care are aboriginal – even though they make up less than eight per cent of Canada's children.

"We're looking at thousands and thousands of kids who are being raised away from their families," she said in an earlier interview. "One of the big lessons that all of us should have learned, and certainly the government should have learned, from residential school, is that children need to grow up in their families. Then they learn the culture of themselves and their people."

Below, the trailer for a documentary being made about this era, which took an entire generation of children away from their families even as residential schools closed down.

Vern Harper, an aboriginal urban elder, talks about the use of the sweat lodge as a way to counter cultural oppression.

[Toronto Star](#)

October 28, 2013

Joe Fiorito

Vern Harper is an aboriginal urban elder; for the past ten years or so, he has worked at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, helping native people who suffer from alcohol or drug addictions. But Vern hasn't worked at CAMH for months.

He said, "They told me they were sailing in a different direction." When I called, a spokesperson for CAMH said Vern is still on staff as a casual employee, and they have taken on two other elders and are offering additional services, based on client feedback.

That may be, but Vern hasn't worked since April; sounds to me like he's been dumped and that's between him and them.

But I was curious to know why Vern was doing that sort of work in the first place. He said, "I was deprived of my culture, growing up. I want to keep our men and women out of prison and to work with our youth so they don't go into prison."

In essence, he has been trying to counter the cultural isolation many native people feel. How? In addition to working with people at CAMH he said, "I have a sweat lodge in Guelph. I'm an unusual lodge keeper; there are lodges for women, and lodges for men; mine is for families."

That's both modern, and apt; periodically, he would bring people to his lodge as a way of reintroducing them to their culture.

The purpose of the sweat lodge? "You sweat the poison out of your body. You purge spiritually, mentally and physically." I have never been to a sweat.

He said, "I sit in the eastern door, facing west. My wife is on the left; the women sit on that side. On this side, the men; the boys sit with the men."

Why do the boys sit with the men? "Because that's what they're going to be." Why sit in a circle? "Because no one's in front and no one is in back. That's the beauty of the circle — no one above, no one below. When people step into the circle, they're all equal."

And then? "We do smudging, to purify. The most important medicine we have is tobacco, natural tobacco; we also use sage, cedar and sweetgrass."

Some refer to the experience of the sweat lodge as "Burn With Vern." It is powerful, by all accounts, especially for those who have problems with substance abuse and who suffer the effects of cultural oppression.

Vern said, "The sweat lodge is on some Jesuit property. I have a relationship with the Jesuits — I leave them alone, they leave me alone. I've been down in the bush 30 years, running my lodge."

You might like to know that the rocks heated for use in the lodge are called grandfathers; the rocks must be carefully chosen so that they don't split or crack or explode.

Vern said, "The quarries, when they found out we were willing to pay for the grandfathers ..." The going rate for a grandfather is \$350.

I can't quite figure out why CAMH isn't letting its aboriginal clients burn with Vern any more, but I can tell you that he has more back-story than most people, and it's easy to see that his life experience has given him a certain credibility.

He was born in Regent Park; according to the records he was born in 1936, but his aunties said he was born in 1932. When he was a boy, he was taken from his family and raised in foster care. He was told his family did not want him; that was a brutal lie.

His experience in foster care was gothic in its horror and the scars are still painful to him; it is a miracle that he remains both wise and gentle.

It was not always so.

When he left foster care, he enlisted and fought in Korea. He also became a professional boxer. He said, "If you could get past me, you could go somewhere. The bell would ring and I'd come out in a hurry. They called me Hurricane Harper. I separated the men from the boys."

I could see the effects of boxing on his hands, but his nose is perfectly straight. He smiled and said he had good doctors.

All along, he struggled with his demons, and he flirted with radical politics. At one point in his life, Vern considered seeking asylum in another country but, at the last minute, it occurred to him that the real battle was here at home.

"They say I'm an activist. No. I'm a dissident. The thing with dissidents is to build."

What will he do, now that he is no longer serving at CAMH? He said, "One door closes and another opens. I just got one day a week at NaMeRes."

Beyond this, he is unsure.

I burn for Vern.

BC physicians get First Nations training

[Prince George Local News](#)

October 28, 2013

Jonathon Brown



Physicians in rural areas of BC's north are getting special training delivering better care to First Nations and Aboriginal patients.

The "Indigenous Cultural Competency program" offers training online for physicians to provide a more appropriate style of care.

Aboriginal Health Director Leslie Varley with the Provincial Health Services Authority hopes the cultural awareness program will alleviate the stigma of racism she says many First Nations encounter when they

seek medical attention.

"There's a high level of distrust among Aboriginal people and health-care providers," Varley says. "Also, a very high level of racism and stereotyping from the health-care system."

She says physicians' attitudes prompted the program to change the way First Nations and Aboriginal patients receive care.

"It's very common for health care providers to make an assumption, for example, that Aboriginal people are drunk, when they might be experiencing diabetes," she says.

She says the training doesn't speak to First Nations' cultures, specifically, allowing for each community to take that element on, themselves.

"We talk about the history, we talk about why Aboriginal people don't seek medical attention with the health-care system, and what led up to that," she says. "But we leave it up to first Nations' communities, and Metis communities to talk about their culture."

The program was created jointly between the Health Services Authority, the BC Medical Association, and the Ministry of Health.

The provincial government, along with the BC Medical Association committee is granting \$10,000 in funds to allow physician access to training.

Regina lawyer argues not enough aboriginal faces on Sask. jury rolls

[Regina Leader-Post](#)

October 29, 2013 8:58 AM

Barb Pacholik



Defence lawyer Bob Hrycan talking with reporters outside Queen's Bench Court in Regina, SK. Photograph by: Bryan Schlosser, Regina Leader-Post files.

If one has a right to be tried by a jury of peers - shouldn't there be more aboriginal faces on Saskatchewan's juries when the accused is of aboriginal ancestry?

Regina lawyer Bob Hrycan has launched a unique legal challenge which, if successful, could have farreaching implications for the jury system in this province.

Stony Lee Cyr is a 36-year-old aboriginal man who faces trial on one count of aggravated assault and two counts of assault with a weapon stemming from injuries suffered by a man, also aboriginal, in 2011 on the Pasqua First Nation.

Cyr wants to be tried by a jury.

But his lawyer is seeking to have the charges stayed before they even get to trial - arguing the Saskatchewan government has failed in its constitutional obligations when it comes to juries and aboriginal accused, like Cyr. Even if the trial proceeds, Hrycan says his client has a treaty right to at least a partially aboriginal jury.

"I can tell you from my own personal experience - an aboriginal person facing trial by 12 white jurors does not believe he's going to receive a fair trial," the veteran lawyer said in an interview after court.

"No applications like this have ever been made," he added.

Arguments on the issues are expected to be heard over the next couple days in Regina Court of Queen's Bench, when government lawyers will also respond to the application.

As part of his submissions, Hrycan intends to reference a report, prepared by the Justice Ministry in 2004, which explored the issue of under-representation by aboriginal people on juries.

"Our position is the government chose not to act when they were aware of the problem. Now there's a constitutional dimension to the problem," said Hrycan, who contends there is "systemic underrepresentation" of aboriginal people throughout the jury selection process.

On Monday, Justice Lian Schwann began to hear evidence on the defence application when Hrycan called Sheriff John Rhineland to explain how residents are picked for jury service.

Rhineland admitted that in his 30 years working with the sheriff's office, he has seen only "a handful" of people from First Nation reserves serve on juries in the Regina judicial district. However, he noted that jurors aren't required to identify ancestry nor is it listed on the jury summons.

He told the court he has heard from some aboriginal people summonsed for jury service that they would not serve because "they don't trust the system" or didn't want to be in the position of judging someone. Others living on reserve have raised logistical problems of childcare and travel to come into Regina.

The application follows a report released earlier this year in Ontario. Authored by former Supreme Court justice Frank Iacobucci, he concluded aboriginal people in that province aren't sufficiently represented on juries - a problem he subsequently suggested likely exists throughout the country. Part of the Ontario problem is that potential jurors are chosen from municipal assessments lists. But because aboriginal people on reserves don't own land, they don't appear on those lists.

In Saskatchewan, prospective jurors are chosen at random using computerized lists of those with Saskatchewan health cards within a judicial district.

Earlier this year, an Ontario court ordered a new trial for a convicted killer after finding the province had violated his rights by failing to ensure aboriginal people were properly represented on jury rolls, despite knowing of the longstanding problem.

Hrycan said that decision reworked the legal landscape for constitutional obligations and juries. He said the ruling doesn't mean an accused has a right to have certain members of his own race on the jury, but rather to ensure members of his race have an equal opportunity to make it onto the list or roll of potential jurors.

The racial makeup of juries became a heated controversy in 2003 after an all-white jury acquitted two Caucasian men of sexually assaulting a 12-year-old aboriginal girl. At that time, the provincial government said it was embarking on a review of the jury selection process to explore ways of ensuring more racial balance.

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First Nations' clean energy efforts get \$1.3 million backing from B.C. gov't

[The Province](#)

October 28, 2013



B.C. Aboriginal Affairs Minister John Rustad says clean energy offers an evolution in the relationship between government, business and First Nations. Photograph by: JONATHAN HAYWARD, THE CANADIAN PRESS

VANCOUVER — A dozen British Columbia First Nations will share \$1.3 million in provincial funding to develop clean energy, Aboriginal Affairs Minister John Rustad announced Monday during a speech to the Clean Energy Association of B.C.

But some First Nations fear, despite the funding, that government interest in the green option is cooling in the shadow of the province's multibillion-dollar liquefied natural gas dreams.

Judith Sayers, a former chief of the Hupacasath First Nation on Vancouver Island and now an association board member, said clean energy was not part of BC Hydro's draft 20-year plan released in August.

"A \$50 billion industry being cast aside in the province? It's amazing to me that that could actually happen, that we could be so fully left out of the next 20 years of electricity planning," Sayers said after listening to Rustad speak.

"Especially in light of how involved First Nations are in this industry and how much benefit this brought — jobs, capacity building, benefits in the community for language and culture. That's more the things that we focus on instead of revenue."

Energy Minister Bill Bennett told conference attendees that he has ordered the Crown corporation to revise the plan to include investment in clean energy.

Rustad said after his speech that the government continues to move forward with its clean energy strategy and investments.

"LNG is the most exciting opportunity that this province has probably ever seen, and may ever see in the future. It is enormous in what it will do," he said.

"However, there are tremendous other projects that are going on around the province, whether it's in clean energy, or whether it's in forestry, whether its in agriculture or mining.

Rustad said in his noon-hour speech that clean energy offers an evolution in the relationship between government, business and First Nations.

"It may not be perfect. It may not be able to resolve all sort of issues, but it's a huge step and it's a huge opportunity for building the kind of economic potential and the kind of partnerships that we want to see, and ultimately, building that better relationship government-to-government," he said.

Under the provincial First Nations Clean Energy Business Fund, up to \$40,000 is available for bands to develop the capacity for clean energy and as much as \$500,000 is available in equity funding to invest in projects.

Among the 12 recipients announced Monday, the Lake Babine Nation will look at using wood chips for a biomass heating system, and the Shishalh (Sechelt) Nation will invest in the 33-megawatt Narrows Inlet hydro project.

Sayers said clean energy has a minimal impact on the environment, and has greater appeal to First Nations than some of the energy projects that have faced opposition from aboriginal groups. More than 80 bands were represented at the conference in Vancouver.

"It's easier to be involved in this industry than being in, you know, the Enbridge project, where the environmental impacts can't be prevented," she said.

"The most important thing is our way of life and continuing to exercise our rights. If we can't do that, we don't want the projects."

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Brazeau apologizes to Aboriginal people, says he parroted PMO lines

[APTN National News](#)

Oct 28, 2013

Jorge Barrera



OTTAWA—Algonquin Sen. Patrick Brazeau said many of his past statements on the First Nations file came straight from talking points written by the Prime Minister's Office.

Brazeau said his current troubles over Senate expenses began a year ago when he challenged Prime Minister Stephen Harper during a caucus meeting to call a national inquiry into murdered and missing Indigenous women.

Brazeau also said that Conservative Sen. Marjory LeBreton, who was once government leader in the Senate, doesn't like "Aboriginal people" or the "Aboriginal agenda."

The embattled Senator made the statements to CBC.

Brazeau has repeatedly turned down interview requests from *APTN National News*.

Brazeau, along with Sen. Mike Duffy and Sen. Pamela Wallin, are facing a Senate motion seeking to suspend them from the Red Chamber. All three are accused of filing faulty expense and housing claims.

Brazeau, who is facing trial next February on assault and sexual assault charges, said that his downfall with the Conservative Party began a year ago when he challenged Harper to call the inquiry.

"That caused a little rift within caucus," said Brazeau. "My political downfall began approximately a year ago."

During the interview Monday with CBC, Brazeau also issued an apology to the "Aboriginal community" saying he was wrong to put his faith in Harper.

"I took too much direction from the PMO for what I said in the past about Aboriginal people," said Brazeau. "I made a mistake, I put my loyalty and trusted this prime minister to do the right thing."

Brazeau also fired back at LeBreton, who called Brazeau a failed experiment.

"I don't think she likes the Aboriginal agenda or Aboriginal people in general," said Brazeau.

Brazeau also said he was hospitalized for eight days in September. He gave no details.

That month, Gatineau police were called to a house belonging to a woman Brazeau was involved with romantically.

Brazeau's Oct. 9 court date on the assault and sexual assault charges stemming from a separate relationship was pushed back to Feb. 14 over health concerns.

Program set up to help Aboriginal women create new businesses

[Comox Valley Echo](#)

October 29, 2013

Michael Briones

The Wachiay Friendship Centre is offering Aboriginal women a hands-on approach on how to create small businesses.

It has established the Small Business Incubator Centre program, which is a one-year pilot project that's funded by Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada. It was officially opened last week and was attended by North Island MP John Duncan.

Coordinator Jay Silverberg said it's targeted specifically at self-identified aboriginal women.

"It's a great place for businesses to nurture and give birth to new businesses," said Silverberg. "They're used all over North America and Europe. Some people take it just to get information and build confidence they may go into business down the road."

The program provides participants with the facilities, computers, long-distance web, graphic design and tons of mentoring that's intended to deliver all the skills needed for aboriginal women to start a business of any kind.

"We do workshops twice a week," said Silverberg. "The most important thing is we run mentoring sessions as often as candidates want. It's one-on-one, very much involved in their business, and how to make their business work and what they need."

Participants are also given guidance how to acquire funds, market their products and maintenance of their businesses.

"It's a very hands-on, very complete approach," said Silverberg. We try not to talk at the candidates but we talk to them. It's very personalized. We try not to just lecture, lecture and tell them this is the business."

Since it started, it has attracted close to 50 women, some of whom came with business plans while others attended in the hope of learning ways to sustain or expand their ventures. They include jewelry manufacturers, flower decorators, yard maintenance,

seniors residence, writers, painters, soap manufacturers and many more.

"It's a little bit of anything and everything," said Silverberg. "It's anything that can generate revenue for these women without a large outlay of cash. That's what a microbusiness is."

The Wachiay Friendship Centre previously ran a similar program called Women in Business that lasted two years. It was a successful program said Silverberg with close to 200 graduates with lots of success stories.

Anyone interested in attending the session can contact Lisa at Wachiay at 250-338-7793, ext. 261 or e-mail lisa@wachiay.com for more information.

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Archbishop Weisgerber to Canadians: Take aboriginal justice seriously

[Catholic News Service](#)

October 29, 2013

Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA, Ontario (CNS) -- As Archbishop James Weisgerber of Winnipeg, Manitoba, prepares to retire, he remains concerned about justice for Canada's aboriginal peoples.

"I don't think there is any issue facing Canadians more serious than this one," Archbishop Weisgerber said Oct. 28, the day Pope Francis announced that he had

accepted the archbishop's resignation. "And I don't think we're taking it that seriously."

The Canadian government is banking on oil production and building pipelines to transport it across the country and "all of it goes across aboriginal land," he said. "Nobody's talking about the need to negotiate on all of this. I'm not sure it's on the agenda of ordinary Canadians or on the agenda of the church."

The recent violent demonstration in New Brunswick over hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, also represents a clash over resources and land, he said.

Aboriginal peoples have different understandings of the meaning of aboriginal rights, sovereignty, and title "that lead to very different conclusions," Archbishop Weisgerber said. "I feel the church has to be involved, and our people need to be sensitized to the parameters of this discussion."

"My concern has got to do with people we have dealt with badly, that we have mistreated, through lots of ignorance and good will, but we have not respected them," he said.

Archbishop Weisgerber was born in Vibank, Saskatchewan in 1938, and said the community was "so completely Catholic" and "the church was at the center of everything in our existence" that it was hard to avoid becoming a priest in those circumstances. He said he knew he wanted to be a priest by the age of 6: "I never wanted to do anything else."

Ordained a priest in 1963 in the Regina Archdiocese, he worked on reserves, where he "got to know aboriginal people and appreciate very much who they were."

In 1990, he came to Ottawa to serve as the secretary-general of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, and news of abuses at Indian residential schools broke.

"I hadn't even got the chair of the secretary-general warm," he said. This put him on a "long, steep learning curve."

He was named bishop of Saskatoon in 1996 and, four years later, he was named archbishop of Winnipeg.

Winnipeg has about 75,000 aboriginal people in the archdiocese, which includes about a dozen reserves, he said. The majority of Canada's aboriginal peoples have been Christian and many of them Catholic, he said.

"How do we embrace the richness of each other's culture?" he asked. "That is challenging to everybody, including the aboriginal people, to be open to others."

"It's so clear to me that in Manitoba the future is the reconciliation with aboriginal people," he said. "The stakes are very high. There can't be winners and losers. Either we all win or we all lose.

"I have tried very hard to bring this issue into the life of the church," he added.

Winnipeg also has about 60,000 Filipinos who make up the majority of practicing Catholics in the diocese, he said. Some of the largest parishes, including the cathedral, are 90 percent Filipino.

The challenge is to be open to one another, he said, to become a community and not separate people living side by side, and worshipping side by side.

Archbishop Weisgerber served the bishops' conference as co-treasurer, vice president and as president from 2007 to 2009.

In 2009, he arranged a meeting for representatives of Assembly of First Nations with Pope Benedict XVI. In that meeting, the pope expressed sorrow at the anguish caused by "the deplorable conduct of some members of the church" in the operations and management of the former Indian residential schools.

The archbishop said he plans to return to Regina, where his younger sister still lives. Among his future plans, he said he hopes to walk the Way of St. James across northern Spain, perhaps next year. He said he has not started training yet for the pilgrimage.

Pope Francis appointed Bishop Richard Gagnon of Victoria, British Columbia, as the next Winnipeg archbishop. Archbishop Weisgerber will remain as apostolic administrator until Archbishop Gagnon is installed later this year or early next year.

First Nations artists decry fashion brand

[Montreal Gazette](#)

October 29, 2013

Isa Tousignant



The Inukt line features First Nations-themed clothing and objects. Nathalie Benarroch, who created the line and isn't of aboriginal descent, says she is puzzled by the backlash from indigenous artists. Photograph by: Evran Boisjoli and Derek Branscombe

MONTREAL - There's a battle of Montreal museums going on that is displeasing some First

Nations artists.

On Oct. 16, the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal (MACM) held a festive opening for Beat Nation, an exhibition that underscores the connection between contemporary indigenous art and hip-hop culture.

The next day, a different kind of launch took place: the inauguration at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (MMFA) boutique of a luxury fashion and homeware line called Inukt, featuring First Nations-themed objects, including an armchair decorated with a silkscreened head of a chief wearing a feather headdress, and little plastic "Indian girl" dolls.

Unconnected to any exhibition on view at the MMFA, the line was created by Montreal art director Nathalie Benarroch, who isn't of indigenous descent and who recently returned to Canada after two decades in the Paris fashion industry.

Some First Nations artists involved with the Beat Nation exhibition are not happy with the Inukt line, and are not shy about saying so.

"Inukt has a name that makes it sound like it is Inuit- or Northern-focused, and then what you get is a complete mishmash," said Tania Willard, an artist from the Secwepemc Nation and one of the two curators of Beat Nation. "We have distinct nations; we are not pan-Indian, and you can't just take our culture and art. Our ancestors fought to leave us their legacy, culture and esthetics — fought with their lives."

But Benarroch, who has been at the heart of a Facebook maelstrom, where some quite virulent critiques and claims of cultural appropriation have been posted on the Inukt page, said she is puzzled by the backlash.

"I don't understand all this hatred," said Benarroch, who explained that she launched the line in an attempt to add sparkle to the Canadian image. "You've always got this idea that everything that's made in Paris is so glamorous, but being an art director, I know it's just a question of branding. Canada can also be just as glamorous."

The Inukt line includes furniture, baseball T-shirts and decorative pillows screen-printed with historical photos of unidentified First Nations people. One series of photos is given an Andy Warhol treatment, which literally turns the subjects' skin red.

"Trying to counteract trinket culture while using trinket culture is completely ass-backwards," said Sonny Assu, a Montreal-based Laich-kwil-tach artist of the We Wai Kai Nation who has two monumental works in Beat Nation. Assu is incensed by what he calls Benarroch's "spaghetti western point of view" on indigenous peoples.

The choice to carry the disputed collection at the MMFA was made by Sylvie Laroche, manager of the boutique. "It's tourist season now, and Europeans are nuts for this type of product. I sold a \$1,600 bag the second day the collection was displayed," she explained.

Laroche has become uncomfortable, though, with the controversy surrounding Inukt. "My aim is to offer artisans a platform to show their beautiful collections, but I have no intention of embarrassing the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, that's for sure," she said. "I've told Nathalie that if the debate continues, I'll have to see what I do."

To Benarroch, her brand is a love letter to Canada. "When I moved back here, all of a sudden I saw everything that I grew up with in a totally different way," she said. "I was struck by our beautiful snowy landscape, by the fall trees, and by our First Nations and Inuit cultures."

But faces are not leaves. When asked whether she feels she is portraying a heritage that isn't her own, the designer admitted, "It's not mine. But do you have to be French to eat a baguette? Do you have to be Italian to speak Italian? This is just fashion. I'm not trying to be philosophical, or political, or cultural, or historical. We all have deep, intense, challenging lives, and fashion is light. That's what I like about it."

To Assu, Inukt isn't so easily justified, because it's harmful to a contemporary indigenous identity.

"Look at Beat Nation: that is the authentic voice of indigenous people right there," he said. "Showing that we're not succumbing to the stereotype and that we're not pandering to the tourist esthetic to make a quick buck."

For more information on the Inukt line, visit inukt.com. For more information on Beat Nation, visit macm.org.

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Skills database creating First Nations work opportunities

[Northern Ontario Business](#)

October 29, 2013

Lindsay Kelly



Eagle Lake First Nation economic development officer Devon MacKinnon Ottetail (left), Chief Arnold Gardner (centre) and Running Deer Resources president Jamie Saulnier recently spoke with industry representatives about the First Nation's new Community Resource Information System (CRIS), a new database that catalogues skills and assets in First Nations communities, creating better opportunities for engagement with industry and employment for First Nations residents.

Bidding on [construction](#) projects, Jamie Saulnier found it difficult to engage the First Nations communities in which he was working.

He wanted to hire First Nations residents to work for him, but with little information available about the communities, it was hard to know how to start.

Over the last six years, Saulnier has been devising a solution.

Working through his Manitoba company, Running Deer Resources, Saulnier has created a strategy that takes a proactive approach for First Nations to engage industry. Now complete, the strategy invites industry to the community to learn about the people, take stock of its assets and engage in meaningful collaboration on development projects that results in employment for local residents.

"We're trying to shine a light on the community itself to showcase everything that it has," Saulnier said. "From that, industry players that are interested in working with the community, whether it's business or whether it's trying to find employees, can work directly with that community to do that."

Collaborating with Migisi Sahgaigan (Eagle Lake) First Nation, near Dryden, Running Deer has created the Community Resource Information System (CRIS), which catalogues all workers in the community, their skills, and work eligibility. Its sister database, the Community Assets Inventory Program (CAIP), inventories the community's assets, such as equipment and industry related businesses.

Companies wanting to engage with Eagle Lake can register with the CRIS website, fill out the required forms, and from there, get contact information, view resumes and post job vacancies.

To handle this new service, Saulnier has since formed a subsidiary company. Running Deer Resources handles Aboriginal engagement exclusively now, while RDR Industrial Contractors deals with the construction arm of the company.

While he's achieved what he set out to do six years ago, Saulnier is now looking beyond the borders of individual communities.

His next goal is to create a regional portal, into which all area First Nations would input their data.

It's a positive collaboration for both sides, because it creates a true partnership, Saulnier said.

"As new communities come online, that's going to now identify a whole new workforce and new set of businesses that are available," he said. "Eventually, if we can have that throughout northwestern Ontario, the goal is that anybody that is looking to perform work in northwestern Ontario would then have the ability to log into the regional portal and locate communities and locate employees."

There is a charge associated with Running Deer's Aboriginal engagement services, and communities that sign up are issued a licensing agreement for the system. But Saulnier emphasizes he's not in it to make money.

"We want to make this as easy as we possibly can for both parties," he said.

He acknowledges not all communities have the resources to pay for this kind of strategy, and that's why he's taking his case to the next level.

In October, Saulnier presented his idea at the national chiefs assembly in Lac Seul First Nation, and he's hoping to get an audience with federal Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt at a future date.

If this initiative gets federal support, Saulnier believes the initiative can become an affordable, viable option for all First Nations.

"I've reached the end of the road—somewhat," Saulnier said. "We've stopped building and we've accomplished what we set out to do so long ago. From here, it's to water that seed that we've planted." www.eaglelakefirstnation.ca

Federal government sets record straight on FNUniv lease

[Regina Leader-Post](#)

October 29, 2013

Kerry Benjoe



*The First Nations University of Canada campus in Regina.
Photograph by: Don Healy, Regina Leader-Post files*

Soon after taking office, the former First Nations University (FNUUniv) president Doyle Anderson decided not to extend the lease to the university's only tenant.

Last week, during the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations' fall assembly it was made public that Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) was not renewing its lease resulting a \$1-million loss in yearly revenue for the university.

Since opening its doors ten years ago, AANDC has leased the top floors of FNUUniv.

The most-recent lease was set to expire on April 30, 2013 and on July 18, 2011, Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC) contacted the FNUUniv to initiate negotiations to extend it for a fiveyear term.

However, six months later, new president Doyle Anderson rejected the PWGSC offer to extend the lease advising PWGSC that due to the university's planned future growth and development, it was not prepared to provide the amount of space required by PWGSC for ANNDC.

As a result, PWGSC had to find alternate accommodations.

It negotiated with FNUUniv to extend the lease to April 30, 2014, to allow sufficient time to undertake a public lease tender process.

Then in late July 2012, PWGSC initiated and advertised a public tender process. PWGSC said the university had an opportunity to participate in the process but did not respond to the public tender.

After Anderson left the university in April to tend to family health issues, acting president Juliano Tupone attempted to renew the lease but by that time it was too late. The tendering process closed Aug. 9, 2012 and a new lease contract was awarded on Oct. 17, 2012, for space located at 1827 Albert St., with a May 2014 occupancy for AANDC.

"Since I came on as acting president, I decided along with the rest of the management team and in discussions with our board chair that it would be valuable to reach out to AANDC and indicate that we valued them as tenant and as a partner and we would be

happy to have them stay in our building," he said.

"We wanted to maintain them as a tenancy because we valued them as a tenant and certainly as a partner and a stakeholder," he added.

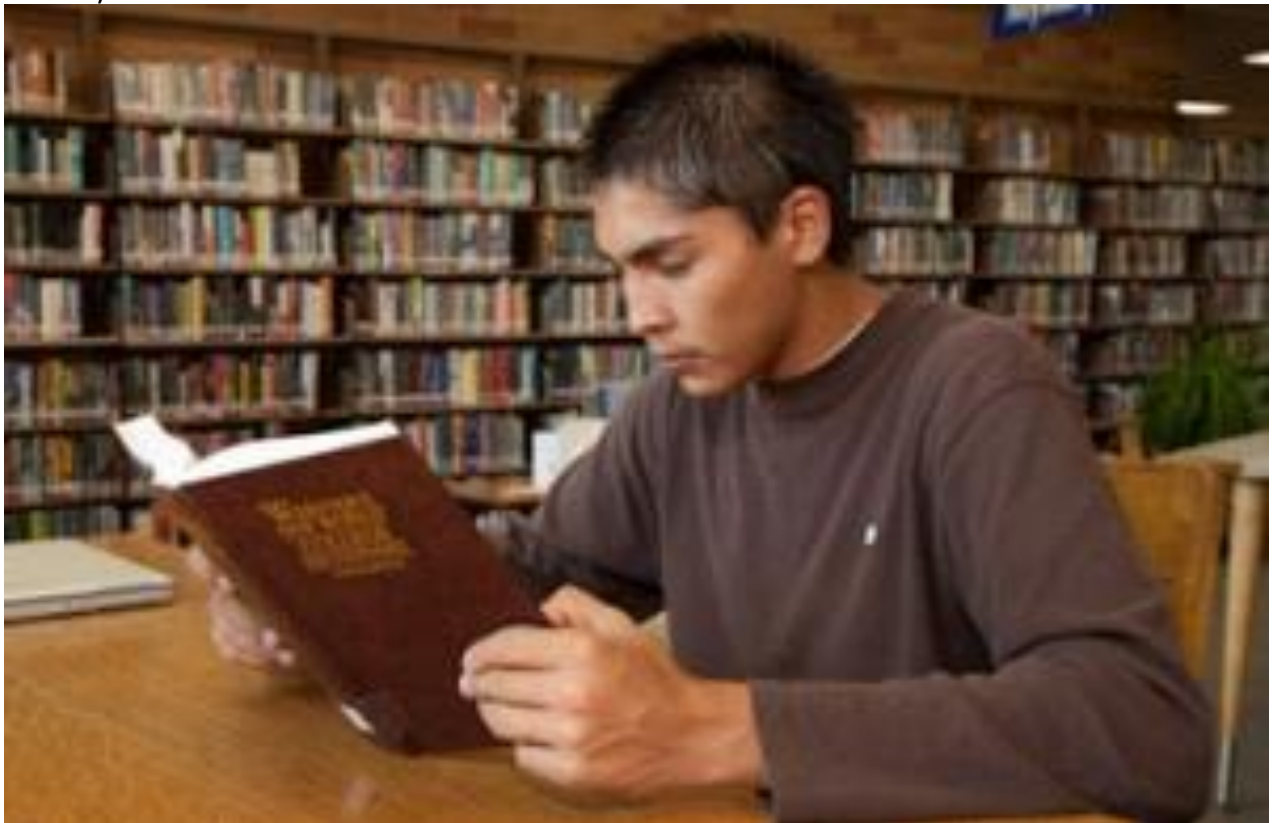
The university is now working with a commercial realtor to find suitable tenants for the building. When AANDC moves, some of the space they currently occupy will be opened up for more classroom space.

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Aboriginal literacy focus of Banff conference: National Reading Campaign looking at ways to boost skills in native communities

[CBC News](#)

Oct 29, 2013 8:43 AM MT



The National Reading Campaign is facilitating a series of three policy roundtables over three years to boost literacy in native communities. (National Reading Campaign)

Aboriginal community leaders are in Banff this week talking about ways to boost literacy in native communities.

It's the first of three policy roundtables planned by the National Reading Campaign over the next three years to tackle the issue.

A report released this year by TD Bank — which is supporting the initiative — estimated that 60 per cent of aboriginal Canadians don't have the literacy skills to take part in today's economy.

One presenter at the conference said only about one third of native reserves in Canada have libraries.

The Kainai Library on the Blood reserve near Lethbridge is the only one in Alberta.

Patsy Aldana, chairwoman of the National Reading Campaign, said it's essential to boost reading skills in aboriginal communities.

"They're always being blamed for not coming up to the economic and citizenship and health and all of those standards, and yet they're not being given the most fundamental tool — which is to be a reader."

Aldana said it is up to aboriginal leaders to determine the best way to resolve the issue.

But increased funding for libraries and aboriginal librarians would be a big help, she said.

Sheri Mishibinijima is trying to establish a national aboriginal public libraries organization.

The effort recently hit a snag when the group got a letter from the federal aboriginal affairs minister directing it to seek financial backing someplace else, she said.

Métis and non-status Indians defend victory in court: Decision under appeal ruled that Métis and non-status Indians are under federal jurisdiction

[CBC News](#)

Oct 30, 2013 5:00 AM ET Last



Congress of Aboriginal Peoples national vice-chief Ron Swain and National Chief Betty Ann Lavallée appear at a news conference in Ottawa after the Federal Court ruled in their favour in January 2013. The federal government has appealed the decision. (Adrian Wyld/Canadian Press)

The Federal Court of Appeal is being asked to overturn a historic victory that had granted Métis and non-status Indians the right to be treated as "Indians" under the Constitution Act.

After 12 years of legal wrangling, the case finally went to trial in May 2011. It took the Federal Court judge a year and a half to release his ruling that approximately 600,000 Métis and non-status Indians fall under federal jurisdiction. The decision meant they could negotiate access to federal programs and services long denied to them.

'The Métis and non-status Indian people, lacking even the protection of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, are far more exposed to discrimination and other social disabilities. It is true today that in the absence of federal initiative in this field they are the most disadvantaged of all Canadian citizens.' — *Federal Court Judge Michael Phelan, quoting government documents*

But this past spring, [the federal government appealed](#). It said the decision to do so was not taken lightly and came after careful consideration. The appeal is being heard this week.

"What they're doing is putting off the inevitable," said Ron Swain, the national vice-chief of the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, or CAP, in an interview with CBC News. "We won the very first time. We're going to win in appeal. We'll win all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada. Eventually our government has to sit down and negotiate."

Métis and non-status Indians have argued that because neither the provinces nor Ottawa would accept jurisdiction, they fell through the cracks.

"It's very hard to make progress when you don't have proper schooling, when you don't have proper health care," said Joseph Magnet, the lead lawyer representing CAP at the hearing. "And we're very hopeful that the court will agree with us about that and that this will provide the stimulus needed for change."

The trial judge highlighted, in his 175-page judgment, the real effects of a lack of status, when he quoted an internal government document on the matter: "The Métis and non-status Indian people, lacking even the protection of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, are far more exposed to discrimination and other social disabilities. It is true today that in the absence of federal initiative in this field they are the most disadvantaged of all Canadian citizens."

The federal government lawyers, however, in submissions at the hearing Tuesday, argued that the trial judge erred in his judgment and that the framers of the Constitution did not intend Métis to be part of Section 91(24) of the act, which spells out that "Indians" are the exclusive jurisdiction of the federal government.

The case dates back to 1999 when well-known Métis leader Harry Daniels, along with several non-status Indians, took the federal government to court, alleging they were being discriminated against because they were not considered "Indians" under the Constitution. Daniels has since died, but the case continued and many believe it will end up at the Supreme Court.

"There's not a one-size-fits-all solution. It requires some fortitude, some imagination, some resources, some goodwill and some hard work," lawyer Magnet said. "And apparently the government needs also a court to tell it to get started."

Student's vision earns provincial honour

NorthBayNippissing.com

October 30, 2013

Laurel J. Campbell



STURGEON FALLS – When Natalie Restoule, a Grade 12 student at Northern Secondary School, was confronted with bullying and intimidation because of her ancestry, she took unique action.

"I had a vision of giving Aboriginal students a new title, of taking away the negative connotation by educating the other students about Aboriginal

life," she said. "I wanted to give them an opportunity to focus on how we developed and grew as a nation, and get a conversation started."

Restoule arranged a Round Dance at the school and invited all the students and members of the community to participate. Not only did it bring attention to the Idle No More movement and open dialogue around Bill C-45 but it changed attitudes and made friends out of antagonists.

"It was so amazing to see the same people who had been putting others down, holding hands with them and laughing (during the dance). It really made a difference in the school."

Restoule feels the other students were merely "afraid of the unknown."

"One of the things they didn't understand was why we drum. Once they realized that it represents the heart of Mother Earth, that we drum for the life we believe in, they found they didn't have to be afraid."

Last week, Restoule was announced as one of two winners of the Lincoln Alexander Award for leadership in eliminating racial discrimination. She will receive her personalized certificate along with a cash award of \$5,000 in a special ceremony planned for December.

For Restoule, who has plans to attend Canadore College's addiction and wellness program after her high school graduation, followed by teacher's college, the honour is not about recognition, "and it's not about the money," she said.

"It's a confirmation that I'm on the right path, that I'm doing what I was intended to do by trying to do good for the community."

Following her success with the Round Dance, Restoule made presentations to the Near North District School Board about the need for inclusion of Aboriginal culture and is the co-founder of the Aboriginal Youth Council. She is active in her school's First Nations course working towards organizing Northern Secondary School's first Pow Wow in May.

Restoule, who was nominated for the award by her school and supported by her Dokis community, sits on a number of councils, is an honour student and an active participant in school clubs and sports teams.

When the announcement of her leadership award was made public last week, she was in Toronto with Grand Chief Patrick Madahbee attending a forum on partnerships and future building where she said she had the opportunity of listening to the Chief debate with former Prime Minister Paul Martin.

"It was all new to me," she said, "I'm learning so much as I go along. It seems like everything we do is political and if I'm going to be an Aboriginal teacher, activist and motivational speaker, I'll have to work with that."

In her down time Restoule is fine-tuning her music career. She has just signed as the newest artist on Chrystal Shawanda's record label and says her singing style tends to blues and soul.

"I'm really inspired by the message of the blues artists," she said. "They really touch my heart."

The Lincoln Alexandra Award is sponsored by the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration and was first given in 1993. Alexander, the 24th Lieutenant Governor of

Ontario was the first member of a minority group to serve in the position in any province in Canada.

"Receiving this recognition is really awesome," said Restoule. "I'm just blown away. It tells me that I really am doing something good."

Mounties investigate vandalism at First Nations protest site near Houston

[Vancouver Sun](#)

October 30, 2013 8:00

Brian Morton



Houston RCMP is investigating an incident of willful damage at a protest site on the Morice West forest service road overnight Monday. Photograph by: Ian Lindsay, PNG Files

Houston RCMP is investigating an incident of willful damage at a protest site on the Morice West forest service road overnight Monday.

Police said the incident happened at the protest site of the Unistoten First Nation at the 66-kilometre mark of the forest service road.

Police said witnesses stated that they heard a loud bang coming from the far end of the Morice River bridge at 10:30 p.m. Monday. Witnesses saw flames and a vehicle leave the area.

Police found that several plastic containers containing a flammable liquid had been placed up against a large protest placard placed in front of the bridge, and the containers ignited.

There were no injuries or damage to the bridge deck, but the placard was scorched.

Anyone with information regarding the incident is asked to contact Houston RCMP at 250-845-2204 or Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477.

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Mi'kmaq urged to reclaim all Crown land: Band Council issues resolution in midst of shale gas dispute, plans reclamation day for Saturday

[CBC News](#)

Oct 30, 2013 11:52 AM AT



An anti-shale gas protest began near Rexton on Sept. 30 and turned violent on Oct. 17 with RCMP vehicles burned, 40 people arrested. (Jennifer Choi/CBC)

Mi'kmaq Band Council is urging its members to reclaim all Crown land in the midst of the shale gas dispute in New Brunswick.

It plans to hold a "reclamation day" on Saturday. "We will become steward of the land," a resolution issued on Wednesday states.

The resolution comes one month after First Nations people began an anti-shale gas protest near Rexton, which has since been relocated to across the street from the provincial legislature in Fredericton.

The band says it felt "compelled to act."

"Whereas we have lost all confidence in governments for the safekeeping of our lands held in trust by the British Crown; and whereas a notice of eviction from our Keptin has been totally ignored by the provincial government and Southwestern Energy (SWN Resources)," which was conducting seismic testing for shale gas near Rexton.

"Today we have instructed all our people to go out and stake their claims for land they intend to occupy," it states.

People of Elsipogtog have received a form in the mail, asking them to sign up to become stewards, the resolution states.

Study in Regina trial probes why so few aboriginal jurors

[Regina Leader-Post](#)

October 30, 2013

Barb Pacholik



Mistrust of the justice system, fear, and community backlash were among the reasons aboriginal people cited for a lack of participation in the jury selection process, according to a Saskatchewan government survey.

REGINA — Mistrust of the justice system, fear, and community backlash were among the reasons aboriginal people cited for a lack of participation in the jury selection process, according to a Saskatchewan government survey.

The survey, conducted in 2003-04 after a controversial acquittal that sparked questions about the lack of aboriginal participation in juries, was entered into evidence Tuesday in a Regina courtroom as part of an application focused on the jury system.

The survey notes Saskatchewan Justice embarked on the review “in response to public and political criticism.

“In consultation with the sheriffs, it was found that aboriginal people are actually summonsed to jury selection in numbers representative to their proportion in Saskatchewan’s population. However, not all aboriginal people who are summonsed apply to be excused, and a great many just do not show up for jury selection,” the report’s author noted.

Stony Lee Cyr, a 36-year-old aboriginal man facing trial on three serious assault charges, is at the centre of the constitutional and treaty challenge. Relying on the Charter of Rights, Cyr’s lawyer Bob Hrycan has applied to have the charges stayed, contending the government has failed in its constitutional obligations to ensure aboriginal participation in the jury system.

Alternatively, the defence maintains Cyr has the right, under Treaty 4, to request at least a partially aboriginal jury. In arguing the point, lawyer Christopher Funt pointed to a section of the treaty, which dates back to 1874, in which Indians promise to “assist” in bringing to justice and punishment those Indians who breach the treaty or the law.

Taking the witness stand at the hearing earlier in the day, Pat Cambridge, the province’s director of health registration, explained that lists of prospective jurors are generated randomly using electronic records of those with Saskatchewan health cards. She noted that status Indians — with treaty cards — also receive supplementary health benefits federally.

The only way to know if health card holders are aboriginal is if they self-declare, and she has no way of knowing if everyone who registers federally also registers provincially. The system also relies on people to notify the province of address changes.

On Monday, court heard from the sheriff for the Regina judicial district, who admitted often jury summonses sent out to rural post offices — for people who seemingly live on area reserves — aren’t picked up or come back indicating the person has moved.

Part of the challenge in trying to quantify how many aboriginal people are on the lists of potential jurors or actually make it on to the jury is that people aren’t asked to identify ancestry. But a survey, sent out in July 2003, made an attempt by asking sheriffs in various judicial districts to take an educated guess based on name and/or address. For example, in Saskatoon the sheriff reported that of the 29 criminal jury trials conducted over a three-year period, only 29 of 2,449 prospective jurors attending for jury duty were of aboriginal ancestry. And only one was selected for the jury.

In explaining a reluctance to serve on juries, survey responses included knowing the accused or victim or coming from the same community, a feeling that it is wrong to judge others, and intimidation. "The Elders as well as the Indian Justice Council explained that there could be real consequences should someone be on a jury that convicts or dismisses a case involving a victim or accused from their own community," reads the survey report.

When asked what could be done to increase the number of aboriginal jurors, the responses overwhelmingly called for education and information.

Legal arguments on the Charter and treaty were expected to continue Wednesday.

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Aboriginal Children's Village opens in East Vancouver: Housing development built for foster children and their families

[Vancouver Courier](#)

October 30, 2013 11:42 AM

Mike Howell



Terry Azak of the Nisga'a Nation took part in the Totem Pole unveiling ceremony for the Aboriginal Children's Village at Nanaimo and North Grandview Highway. photo: Dan Toulgoet

The opening of an aboriginal housing development built for foster children and their families along the Grandview Highway corridor took on a special meaning for Patrick Stewart last Friday.

Not only did Stewart design the David Pranteau Aboriginal Children's Village at Grandview Highway and Nanaimo Street, the architect is a former foster child.

"I went to eight different schools in 12 years," Stewart told the *Courier* after an elaborate ceremony that included aboriginal dancers and the unveiling of totems. "I didn't have that stability of one spot. So here, for a child to be allocated a unit and have the opportunity to stay here — that's awesome."

Aboriginal foster children are placed in units with foster parents. But if the parents and children don't prove to be a good match, it's the parents who have to move on — not the children, as Stewart did when he was a child.

"The whole foster system needs an overhaul and this is a good start," he said.

The 24-unit building is set up so a foster child could conceivably remain a resident for many years. Some of the units are so-called transition apartments designated for children once they become adults.

Counselling and support for families and children is available at the building, along with training for foster parents and respite workers. An aboriginal art mentorship program, which has welcomed celebrated artist Robert Davidson, is on site.

While Stewart is proud of the new building, he said the public should not lose sight of the fact that thousands of aboriginal people are on waiting lists for suitable and affordable housing in Vancouver and the Lower Mainland.

Lu'ma Native Housing Society, which owns and manages the building, has a waiting list of 4,500 people wanting housing. Other First Nations societies such as Vancouver Native Housing Society also have long waiting lists, Stewart said.

The City of Vancouver's release last month of its March 2013 homeless count also showed aboriginal people comprised 30 per cent of the city's homeless population, although Stewart believes the number is higher. He suggested some of those homeless were likely foster children at one point in their lives.

"There's such a high correlation between being a foster child and homelessness and something like this [building] will hopefully get people another option," he said.

But, he acknowledged, getting more housing complexes built in Vancouver is an expensive venture, noting the new building cost \$17 million and took seven years of wrangling with all three levels of government to get it built.

Lu'ma contributed \$10.6 million, with the provincial government kicking in \$5.2 million and the federal government adding \$710,000. The City of Vancouver provided \$240,000 in addition to levy reductions of more than \$214,000.

Marjorie White, the vice president of Lu'ma Native Housing Society, said the lack of funding committed to more affordable housing makes it difficult to meet the needs of people without decent homes or living on the street. Lu'ma already has 380 apartments spread over 15 buildings.

"We do have a long ways to go," White said. "As we provide housing for individuals, there's always new people moving in to the city. It just adds to our waiting list."

The building was named after Dave Pranteau, who was described by White and others as a tireless leader in the aboriginal community who pushed for more housing and improving social and economic conditions for aboriginal people. He died last year.

"Dave was well known to many of us here in Vancouver and elsewhere in British Columbia for his leadership, teachings and compassion," White said. "He has been by our side and we believe he still is in helping our cause to advocate for safe, culturally appropriate and affordable housing for aboriginal peoples."

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Aboriginal relations division opens at city hall

[Winnipeg Free Press](#)

October 31, 2013

Aldo Santin



WAYNE GLOWACKI / WINNIPEG FREE PRESS Manager Rhonda Forgues officially opens the Aboriginal Relations Division in the Administration Building at City Hall this morning.

City hall opened a new department dedicated to open up civic government to the aboriginal community.

A smudging ceremony this morning marked the grand opening of the offices of the aboriginal relations division.

"We have the largest aboriginal population in Canada," Mayor Sam Katz said at the ceremony. "This could become our greatest asset but it can't unless you give the people the tools and that's what this is all about."

Rhonda Forgues, manager, said the division has several roles within the civic structure.

Working with aboriginal relations leadership teams from every department, the division will ensure programs targeted to the aboriginal community are appropriate.

Forgues said the office will help develop programs that level the hiring field for aboriginal applicants and send teams out into the community to let them know about job openings and steer them through the application process.

Forgues said there are about 800 to 1,000 aboriginal people on the city payroll, reflecting 8.8 per cent of the civic labour force. She said there are no quotas or hiring targets but the city's objective is to increase those numbers to reflect federal labour force guidelines.

Young people leaving the reserve and coming to Winnipeg face an uphill battle, Katz said. Without the appropriate training and education, "what hope do they have of what you and I would call a good life – the answer is next to none.

"With these types of initiatives to give them these tools, that's what makes this so special," Katz said.

'Real social crisis is unfolding' in Nunavik

[Montreal Gazette](#)

October 30, 2013

Philip Authier

QUEBEC — The province's Inuit community has teamed up with the Parti Québécois government to blast Ottawa for dragging its feet on the housing crisis in Nunavik.

"A real social crisis is unfolding in northern Quebec and the indifference must stop," Quebec Intergovernmental Affairs Minister Alexandre Cloutier said.

"The federal government is showing nothing but contempt, as it does in many other examples. They are not even returning calls."

Cloutier made the remarks at a news conference where he was flanked by two key northern representatives, Jobie Tukkiapik, president of the Makivik Corporation, the legal representative of Quebec's 12,000 Inuit, and Tunu Napartuk, mayor of Kuujjuaq, population 2,500.

"Nunavik families cannot wait any longer," Tukkiapik said. "Nunavik Inuit deserve to be treated with dignity. Our health and living conditions should not be a pawn in Canada and Quebec's constitutional squabbles."

"It's urgent, it's important, it's not fair," added Napartuk. "We pay taxes."

The Inuit have been pushing Ottawa for months. Short about 899 dwellings in their communities, in some cases 15 people are living in a two-bedroom home.

The shortage has created a series of social and health problems. Incidents of tuberculosis have increased to 320.4 cases per 100,000 people. In the rest of Quebec, the disease affects less than three people per 100,000.

Tukkiapik noted the two levels of government have been arguing for months, but it was Ottawa that unilaterally stopped building social housing in the community in 1990.

The birthrate in the communities, meantime, has soared.

Cloutier said that for humanitarian reasons, Quebec decided to pour close to \$80 million to build 300 homes by 2016 even if technically it is a federal responsibility.

But the Makivik corporation was told federal Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt was too busy to meet with them.

Officials in Valcourt's office issued a statement Wednesday evening. It said Ottawa "recognizes that housing is fundamental to a good quality of life; that's why we renewed the Nunavik Housing Agreement for 5 more years in 2010, contributing \$17 million annually for the construction of social housing units."

It added Ottawa "provides more than \$350 million in annual funding through the Canada Housing and Mortgage Corporation, to the province of Quebec for new affordable housing."

But Cloutier has added the issue to his list of beefs with the federal government as the PQ exercises its sovereignist governance policy.

Tukkiapik said he is aware of Cloutier's other agenda but the situation is desperate.

"I'm here on behalf of the Inuit and the children I see that do need housing."

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City of Winnipeg creates aboriginal relations department



Elder Margaret Lavalley conducts a smudge ceremony to mark the announcement on Thursday of the City of Winnipeg's new aboriginal relations division. (Sean Kavanagh/CBC)

A smudge ceremony was held Thursday morning at the city's administration building to mark the creation of a new City of Winnipeg aboriginal relations division.

Mayor Sam Katz said the new department will ensure aboriginal Winnipeggers, particularly young people, have the tools needed to succeed here.

"If a young aboriginal person leaves the reserve and comes to Winnipeg with no education and training, what hope do they have of what you and I would call a good life?" he said, calling aboriginal youth a "large and vital segment of our population."

The goal of the six-member ARD is to provide leadership and experience from an aboriginal perspective on programs, services, and initiatives that address the needs of the city's aboriginal community, according to a news release issued by the city.

Another new development is the formation of the aboriginal relations leadership team, a group of senior employees representing all city departments and service areas, who meet regularly to develop and implement aboriginal initiatives, the release stated.

"Formation of this team demonstrates the city's overall commitment to providing opportunities for aboriginal citizens as well as civic employees, current and future."

